

essentials

YOUR HEALTH SOLUTIONS



How to break-proof your bones

Follow these simple suggestions and avoid the ouch-factor!

Jump to it!

Weight-bearing exercises (where you support your body's own weight) like jogging, tennis and walking are great because your bones respond by making new bone tissue and becoming stronger. A US study says that, for even better benefits, bones need to be 'surprised'. Try jumping – it sends a fast-paced force to hips – play skipping with the kids or get on a trampoline.

Catch up on calcium intake

Women aged 19–50 need 1,200mg a day of calcium. 'Yogurt and milk are the best sources,' says Dr Marilyn Glenville, author of *Osteoporosis: How to Prevent, Treat and Reverse It* (£10.99, Kyle Cathie). A cup of yogurt or milk has 300–400mg of calcium and both are also rich in vitamin D, which helps the body absorb calcium.

Don't be D-deficient

Vitamin D is called the sunshine vitamin

Cut out the cigs

It's really as simple as that. Ciggies put a strain on your skeleton because smoking stops your bones' construction cells from rebuilding. Get help from quit.org.uk.

Less of the fizz

Ditch fizzy drinks, suggests Marilyn. They cause calcium to leach from the bones. US research found that women who drank three or more cola-type drinks a day had almost 4% lower bone mineral density.

Watch your weight

Constantly on a diet? You may not be doing your bones a favour. Women with a low BMI are at a greater risk of developing osteoporosis. 'When you lose weight you also lose fat and muscle which help protect your bones – the thinner your frame, the more fragile you are,' explains Marilyn.

Love olive oil

It's well-known that a Mediterranean diet rich in olive oil, fruit and vegetables is good for the heart, but in a recent study, people who consumed more olive oil were found to have higher levels of osteocalcin – a marker linked to bone health. So put olive oil on your salad and eat like you're on hols!

Raise a glass, but no binges

Women aged 50-plus who are moderate drinkers (that's about a glass a night, ladies) have higher bone mineral density than heavy drinkers or those who don't drink at all. 'Keep it sensible,' says Marilyn. 'I'd still advise breaks and definitely no overdoing it.'

Vibrate!

Astronauts lose bone mass when in space, but can rebuild it standing on vibrating plates – so try the Power Plate machine at the gym.

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My grandmother was diagnosed with osteoporosis in her sixties when she fractured her arm after a fall, and my mother was diagnosed a few years after going through the menopause. So I've been determined to try to bolster my own bones by exercising – I love cycling and I do yoga. I also take a calcium supplement, plus a

collagen supplement called Pure-Col that's popular with athletes, as it helps to boost declining collagen levels and repair and strengthen cartilage, bone, muscle and tendons. ♦ Pure-Col, £29.95 for 90 capsules, lookandhealth.co.uk.

